



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
December 17, 2012
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, R. Corcoran, F. Acosta

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, C. Snyder, E. Lloyd, L. Murin, M. Bembenick, C. Zale, V. Spencer, R. Johnson, D. Cituk, C. Jones

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:28 pm by President Acosta.

Ms. Kelleher explained that Mr. Waltman would not be attending the Committee of the Whole meeting this evening and would be calling in for the regular meeting. She stated that she explained the call-in procedure to Mr. Waltman.

I. Review Topic List Generated at Finance Committee Meeting

Ms. Reed stated that the Finance Committee meeting had good conversation.

Ms. Kelleher questioned if she should work with Administrative staff to prioritize the topic list. Ms. Reed stated that she should.

II. WWTP Digester Project Update

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that this topic was added to the agenda after it was printed and distributed.

Mr. Johnson stated that he would be making a brief project update. He stated that the next phase of construction will be the secondary digesters. He stated that there are 750,000 gallons of product per tank and the WWTP has two tanks. He stated that this project is required by EPA. The engineering phase is complete and the cleaning phase is currently out for bid.

Mr. Johnson stated that he estimates that bids will be between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. He stated that the tanks will be cleaned and inspected to determine if additional rehabilitation is needed. He stated that one tank will also be upgraded to allow its use as a primary as well as a secondary digester. He stated that this will give the plant additional flexibility.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how often the tanks are cleaned. Mr. Johnson stated that it is recommended that they be cleaned every 5 – 10 years but that the plant has no record of the last time it was done.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how the cleaning will effect plant operations. Mr. Johnson explained that one tank will be cleaned at a time. He stated that it will not have a large effect on operations.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the life expectancy of the tanks. Mr. Johnson stated that they should last approximately 40 years.

Mr. Marmarou questioned when these tanks were installed. Mr. Jones stated that they were installed in 1987 or 1988.

Mr. Sterner questioned how much funding is available before the additional financing is needed. Mr. Johnson stated that enough remains for this project. He stated that Ms. Snyder is currently reviewing the funding.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Vind will begin working on the bond issue in the fall and that it is expected to be for \$100 million.

Mr. Sterner stated that the City has already taken a \$50 million bond. Mr. Snyder stated that some of this is still available. She reminded Council that the City has also taken a PennVest loan. She stated that work continues on the Inter-municipal Agreements so that permanent financing can be obtained. Mr. Bembenick explained that Mr. Vind will begin work on the bond issue in March.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the plant has had issues with odors in the past. She questioned if this would be problematic during the cleaning. Mr. Johnson stated that this is possible but that the bid includes a clause stating that odors must be addressed during the cleaning process.

Ms. Reed questioned the number of bids expected on the project. Mr. Johnson stated that there were six firms at the pre-bid meeting. He stated that these specialized contractors travel great distances for work.

Mr. Johnson stated that in addition to the PennVest loan, the City has received two EPA Stag grants and H2O funds.

III. Agenda Review

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Ordinances removing the Managing Director's ability to waive the RFP process and reducing the amount requiring Council approval to zero

Ms. Reed stated that these items were discussing during this evening's Finance meeting. Mr. Bembenick distributed the State purchasing policy. He explained that items costing less than \$5,000 do not require bids, items costing \$5,000 - \$10,000 require quotes and items over \$10,000 must go through the formal contracting process. He stated that the Administration will propose overall revisions to the City's purchasing policies in January 2013. He recommended that Council table both ordinances this evening to allow the Administration time to complete its work on the policy amendment. He stated that the amendment would be ready to introduce at the January 14 meeting and that the Administration has concerns reducing the threshold to zero in relation to emergencies.

Ms. Reed agreed that zero was not reasonable.

Mr. Acosta agreed with Mr. Bembenick. He suggested that since both ordinances are related that they both be tabled.

Ms. Kelleher suggested withdrawing the ordinances as this is the last meeting of 2012 and legislation does not carry over to the new year.

Ms. Reed requested a guarantee that the policy amendment would be introduced at the January 14 meeting as she fears what may happen in the interim.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked the Administration for their research on this issue.

- Ordinance establishing the 2013 positions

Mr. Acosta distributed a proposed amendment which would re-instate two positions in the CSC and reduce two positions in the Mayor's office. The amendment would not affect the budget as the change would be cost neutral.

Ms. Reed stated that Mr. Frymoyer made very good points during his presentation to Council and that this is the result.

Mr. Corcoran stated that he supports the amendment. He noted his concern with the loss of positions in the CSC. He noted his discomfort assuming that trash and recycling billing will be handled by RAWA.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if these two employees are still in the CSC. Ms. Snyder stated that they are and that they will remain temporarily into 2013 until the completion of the Amnesty program in February. She stated that after this program concludes and the trash and recycling billing is assumed by RAWA, the employees will be let go.

Ms. Reed stated that there is no guarantee that these employees would remain through all of 2013. Ms. Snyder stated that they would only be extended on a temporary basis. She again stated that the plan is to eliminate the positions at the end of the Amnesty program in February. She stated that if they need to remain longer, she will amend the Position Ordinance to retain them.

Mr. Bembenick stated that Human Resources will be assisting those whose positions are being eliminated.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he did not support the idea of the CSC when it began but that he has had much positive feedback about residents' interaction with the CSC. He questioned if it was wise to reduce positions in this office. Ms. Snyder stated that the reduction is due to the reduced workload. She stated that it is based on the assumption that RAWA will begin trash and recycling billing. She stated that if this does not occur, then the employees would need to remain or the CSC would fall behind in their work.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted her concern with increasing the scope of RAWA with additional responsibilities. She stated that the RAWA offices moving outside City Hall has created a disjointed operation. She noted the need for the positions to remain in the CSC to allow it to be fully functional.

Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Marmarou described positive experiences they had with the CSC.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that the Administration should not try to fix the CSC as it is not broken.

Mr. Corcoran stated that the transfer of responsibility for the trash and recycling billing may not be a feasible option. Mr. Spencer stated that the Administration is trying to create efficiencies to save funds. He stated that transferring trash and recycling billing to RAWA will save the City serious funds. He stated that there is work to be done on the issue but that the Administration plans to move it forward. He stated that one bill is much more efficient than 4 – 5 bills.

Mr. Corcoran stated that bundling the bills will increase the monthly amount due and may become a hardship for residents. He stated that he has heard this concern from many people. Mr. Spencer stated that the property tax bill was an even more severe increase for people and that was done.

Ms. Snyder stated that currently recycling is billed annually and trash is billed annually or quarterly. She stated that adding these fees to the RAWA bill would allow residents to pay a portion of the fee monthly and could actually assist residents. She stated that postage for mailing the bills was removed from the budget as was \$80,000 for IT support for the billing process. She stated that it was her understanding that this was anticipated and that there will be no additional fee to the City to add this item to the RAWA bills. She stated that RAWA is not ready to take on this project, so it will be postponed.

Mr. Acosta noted the need to educate residents. He also noted the need for the City to understand how this will be handled by RAWA. He stated that residents will continue to want to make cash payments and will have many questions. He cautioned cash flow issues and noted that Council must approve the billing change. *Note: RAWA does not accept payments and does not allow walk-ins.*

Ms. Reed questioned if Council approved making this billing change. Ms. Kelleher stated that they did not. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there has been no legislation brought forward. Ms. Snyder stated that this language is contained in the latest water lease addendum.

Mr. Acosta stated that if this is the case, Council authorized it when the lease agreement was amended. *Note: Trash and recycling billing are not addressed in the RAWA lease agreement.*

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she has other issues about RAWA but that they are executive session material.

Mr. Bembenick explained that moving trash and recycling billing to RAWA for monthly payments will streamline the City's cash flow for these items and that RAWA will make daily cash sweeps to the City.

Mr. Corcoran questioned the success of RAWA collection of delinquent funds versus the City's contractor collecting delinquent trash and recycling fees. Mr. Bembenick stated that he has that information and will provide it to Council. He stated that staggered billing is being considered to alleviate all bills being due the same day.

Mr. Marmarou stated that this may not coincide with residents' income dates.

Mr. Acosta stated that this will not alleviate problems associated with residents wishing to pay cash.

Ms. Snyder stated that other utilities stagger their due dates. She stated that it helps even the work flow and the cash flow.

- Ordinance transferring funds in the 2012 Public Works budget

Mr. Acosta questioned the amount. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that it was included in the body of the ordinance. Mr. Jones stated that it is approximately \$35,000 and is the annual fee.

Mr. Acosta requested that the amount be included in the heading in the future. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will make this change.

- Resolution adopting the amended reuse plan for the Navy Marine Center property

Ms. Kelleher stated that HUD and the Navy are now in agreement with the Legally Binding Agreement. She stated that she is preparing the final packet for submission and a Council resolution approving the plan amendment must be included.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that Ms. Kelleher highlight the current reuse plan. Ms. Kelleher stated that Mary's Shelter will use the main facility as it is in good condition and meets their current and future needs. She stated that the rest of the parcel will be purchased by the Redevelopment Authority for market rate housing. She stated that access roads are already in place and suggested that Margaret St not be opened. She noted her hope that the process will be complete by the end of February or beginning of March.

Mr. Corcoran stated that if contamination is found it is the Navy's responsibility to remediate it.

Ms. Reed thanked all involved in this project for their great work and diligence.

- Conditional Use of 912 Amity St

Ms. Kelleher stated that she wrote the decision based on testimony and Council comments. She stated that it is written to approve the additional unit with conditions. She stated that prior to the issuance of the permit, the property must pass the codes and trades inspections and expand the garage door opening.

Mr. Marmarou suggested tabling the decision until after the inspections are made.

Mr. Corcoran questioned the timeline to render the decision with Council's adjusted meeting schedule.

Ms. Reed stated that the access to the second unit was also questionable.

Mr. Corcoran stated that off street parking will be addressed via a new garage door. He noted that it was unclear if both units had separate entrances.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the garage may not be conducive to a new door based on its construction.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the inspections will confirm these issues.

Mr. Corcoran stated his understanding that trades will not visit the property until after zoning is approved.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant must prove that the property is compliant with all codes. She stated that inspections are necessary. She expressed the belief that this application was incomplete and should not have been processed. Ms. Snyder questioned why this was not processed along with the backlog properties.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that it seems that Council is not ready to vote on this decision.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the 45 day timeframe will allow Council to take action at their January 14 meeting.

Ms. Reed stated that she supports delaying the vote to address these large safety issues.

Mr. Corcoran stated that zoning and planning employees were unable to answer many questions at the hearing.

Ms. Reed suggested that the process be reviewed.

Ms. Kelleher requested that Ms. Snyder request codes and trades to complete their inspections and provide reports to Council staff before the January 14 meeting. She suggested that this resolution be withdrawn from the agenda this evening.

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*